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**Culture and Inaccessibility. Moving from populism to elitism, The Titian  
campaign as case study.**

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To my family

## Culture and Inaccessibility. Moving from populism to elitism, The Titian campaign as case study.

### INTRODUCTION

‘I have no idea of what I am supposed to look at, but it sounds good.’

And elderly lady swirling around and shouting above the  
sound of her audio guide to her friend<sup>1</sup>

In 2008 the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Gallery of London joined forces for a fund-raising campaign to purchase two Titian paintings: *Diana and Actaeon* (fig 1) and *Diana and Callisto* (fig 2). Painted between 1556 and 1559, for King Philip II of Spain, they formed a part of a series of six large mythological pictures. The myth of *Diana and Actaeon* tells the story of the unfortunate encounter between the two, Actaeon stumbles upon Diana while bathing and is turned into a deer as punishment, later finding death by his own hounds that fail to recognise him. Titian’s *Diana and Callisto* represents the moment when Callisto’s pregnancy –after being tricked and raped by Zeus–is discovered by Diana which would punish her by turning her into a bear.

The goal of the campaign was to raise £50 million. The two galleries were to raise the stated amount within the time lapse of four months. The 'Titian campaign', as it was referred to, created its discourse around the motto ‘saving the paintings for the nation’. The vague use of the word ‘nation’ gave the campaign a populist image that presumably held the 'nation's' best interests at heart.

When I encountered this campaign, I was puzzled by the use of the word 'nation' as a binding concept for an ambiguous mass of people. Some of the questions that came to mind were: How can a nationalist campaign have an impact in the twenty first century, where the boundaries of national identities are blurred? How could the success of a campaign that

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Findlay. 2012, *The value of art: money, power, beauty* p. 84

aimed at acquiring an Italian painting hinge on the effectiveness of the word 'nation' in the context of the UK, a country that has been fragmented and constructed by vast movements of migration and merging cultural identities? The seemingly clear/direct importance of an Italian painting in the construction and preservation of British national identity seemed unclear and elusive to me. I began to ask myself, is it just a matter of perception? Is my confusion only due to my status as a foreigner in the UK? Or, is it that the connections made between the British nation and an Italian Renaissance painting are more problematic than what the campaign reveals to the public? This first question about the concept of 'nation' led to a deeper pond of questions and tensions within the Titian campaign.

This dissertation will look at the tensions between populism and elitism present in the Titian campaign. Due to the small space available for discussion, I have chosen the Titian campaign as a reflection of the wider ongoing movement within UK cultural policy. I will expose the conflicts present in the type of discourse used by NGS and NGL to justify the expenditure of such large amounts of (partly public) money to preserve two works of art within the nation's art collections. I will also discuss the extent to which the populist claims made by the NGS and NGL in press releases were coherent with the reality of national institutions; that is, of inevitably moving between public and private interests.

Due to the fact that the campaign moved within the constraints and boundaries set by both private funding and public funding, I will begin by reviewing the cultural policy of the UK. In the first chapter, I will refer to the 'official' discourse of cultural policy in the UK, occasionally moving between the subdivisions and differences between English and Scottish approaches to the same national cultural policy. The focus will eventually be set on Scotland, but this is mainly due to the long and very close relationship between the NGS and the Bridgewater collection.

I believe this initial panoramic view will help us understand the issue at hand and enrich our final analysis of the Titian campaign. During my review of the government's position in the arts and culture, I will ask questions such as: What is/was the goal of the cultural policy?

What are the justifications used to validate that position? What were the outcomes of such a project?

In the second chapter, I will refer to the opposing side of the spectrum; the critical analysis and theories that have questioned the 'altruist' discourses used in both governments political agendas and culture. In order to do so, I will review the work of Pierre Bourdieu, in particular, his study of the obstacles in achieving a complete inclusion of every class into the world of high culture. I will also look at the work of authors like Bridget Fowle that review Bourdieu's work under the light of a contemporary context. We will also take into account the work of Chin-Tao Wu as a basis to analyse the effects of private funding in public art institutions.

In the last chapter, I will move to our key theme, the Titian campaign. I will approach the campaign through a discourse analysis of the press releases. I will try to unravel the tensions and conflicts present in the use of language, as well as question the extent to which the campaign actually recognised or played down some important issues that emerged in the public's response; one of them regarding the expenditure of such a large amount of money for a single work of art in a moment where the country was going through an economic downturn. In my analysis, I will move through three main obstacles for the 'all inclusive-altruist' political agenda: social, political and economic.

## **'Great art for everyone', the altruist UK cultural policy**

I would like to begin this research with an overview of the official view on culture, reflected in the government's cultural policy, and on a smaller scale, in national institutions such as NGS and NGL. I believe this small review of official statements and research performed by the government will help us understand the position national galleries take as representatives of these national projects and goals. I will refer to the time frame between 2008 and our current time (2013), this time lapse is not only chosen because our case study occurred within these years but also because it helps us illustrate the changes within cultural policy in the UK. This chapter will mainly focus on the UK government's position but as this approach would be too narrow and would eventually ignore the peculiarities in Scotland and England as pseudo 'independent' states, I will also refer to their individual positions within the larger national discourse.

To begin, I would like us to remember how public funding for culture works in the UK. On the one hand, the UK government donates money for the arts through Arts Council England. The funding for the arts, and more specifically for museums and galleries, comes from either direct government Grant-in-aid, or resources taken from the National Lottery which was introduced from 1995. In Scotland, the same dynamic of state and National Lottery funds feed national art institutions. Creative Scotland is the public body that deals with funding for all the arts or 'creative industries'.

When going through the official statements made by government representatives (ministers of culture and public body funding institutions) it slowly becomes clear that three concepts/ideas are key in the cultural debate: culture as a means of improving people's lives and educating, culture as a flag for leadership and prestige, and finally culture as a benefit to the economy (mainly through cultural tourism). In this chapter I will refer to and try to untangle these three concepts to make evident how they function as a self-justifying national system that moves culture.

## Culture and arts as fountain of social improvement

The first sentence of the annual review of the ACE in 2008 was 'Great art for everyone'. This simple and short statement holds the essence of the government's goal. Just by looking closely at this sentence, we are able to infer that it is the government's duty (through national institutions) to ensure that art and culture overcome all barriers, that is: social, educational and economic; meaning to say that art is made available for *everyone*. I believe that before we move further we should ask ourselves a very basic but important question, why should culture and *great art* be for everyone? A possible answer is exposed by Alan Davey, current Chief Executive of ACE:

Governments and organisations in civil society have a duty to ensure welfare and opportunity for all citizens, and in the past this has been understood in terms of material welfare— improving wealth creation and ensuing poverty is reduced. But we must also pay attention to poverty of aspiration: an outlook on life and an ability to get on in the world. The bottom line of GDP is not enough in itself— citizens need a different kind of wealth to live a rounded life. That's where the arts, and culture more generally, come in<sup>2</sup>

As stated by Davey, the government's responsibility of providing holistic welfare to all citizens has a central component: arts and culture. Culture is seen as a positive force in individual development and through the sum of these individuals, the future regeneration of entire communities. Davey's statement approaches the matter from a view in which culture and all of its components are given an intrinsic value (that of possessing the ability of improving people's lives). The ACE has stated that there are three main ways in which people describe the value of the arts: building people's capacity for understanding and

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Davey, 2008. *Artistic Ambition* p.4



navigating the world around them, enriching people's experience of life and offering an important emotional escape and finally, producing wider outcomes or applications, such as creating links between different communities.<sup>3</sup> This argument has also been used in many statements by Scottish and English culture ministers, and I would like us to follow this idea to the end. Going further, we might also say that under this frame of mind, arts and culture (both life performance and objects) are viewed as static. They are non-ideologically or socially charged practices that are simply activated when in the presence of any citizen no matter their social and economic position. If we are careful readers we will notice a first contradiction/obstacle emerge in the motto 'Great art for everyone', on the one hand, this statement positively re-states culture for everyone, on the other, it makes evident that this is an on-going goal and project. That means that *great art* is not for *everyone* just yet. One reason is hidden within the assumptions made by the slogan, if art and culture have this inherent ability of connecting and communicating with all citizens, then we must ask: what were the obstacles in achieving a complete democratization of culture?

Some answers to this question can be found in the qualitative researches led by ACE, such as the arts debate launched in October 2006, that sought 'to find out whether, and how, people in England value the arts'<sup>4</sup>. The 2006 survey exposed that although a vast majority of the population (77 per cent) did attend art events at least once a year, it was actually a very small number of people that engaged with the arts on a regular basis; the document goes on to explain the possible reasons for lack of engagement:

There are people from all parts of society who feel a strong sense of exclusion from the arts, or who simply do not want to take up the opportunities that are currently available. Although lack of money or difficulty in finding or getting to the arts can be reasons for not engaging, in the main barriers appear to be psychological rather than physical. Some feel that the arts are just not for people like them. They believe they wouldn't fit in at an arts event and might be looked down on by other members of

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<sup>3</sup> Arts Council England, 2008. *State of the Arts* p.12

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

the audience.<sup>5</sup>

Now we might ask: how can we overcome this feeling of discomfort that some people feel in art events?

The government's response was the Arts Council plan 2008-11. The plan identified providing early contact with the arts (for children and young people) as one of its development priorities. This was an attempt to overcome the inequality in education that affects attendance to and participation in arts opportunities and events. It was assumed that by introducing children at a young age to art events and institutions the social custom of cultural engagement would stick in later years and hopefully be passed on as well as encouraged in the family environment.

On a smaller scale, national public art institutions such as museums and galleries have reflected in their own policies this national *access* goal. One example is the NG policy which states:

The National Gallery is committed to the widest possible access to the national collection of Western European painting from c.1250 - c.1900, which it houses, conserves and displays. The paintings are held for everyone regardless of education, income, residence, or personal circumstances.

The Gallery's aim is to make physical access to the collection as easy as possible for all; to enable everyone as far as possible to have access to scholarship and information about the collection; and to allow everyone to enjoy and study the collection in as many ways as possible.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond their policy, The National Gallery organises a wide range of projects and resources for all types of visitors from the ones with some type of physical disability to children and vulnerable communities. In its commitment it has become a leader in access projects such as the 'take one picture' project. This project started in 2009 and helped local communities and teachers to engage meaningfully with their local museums and collections. Through this initiative, the gallery promoted the empowerment of local museums and leaders in the task

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<sup>5</sup> Arts Council England, 2008 . *State of the Arts* p.13

<sup>6</sup> The National Gallery London, *Access statement*

of using art as a vehicle for social improvement and empowerment.

### **Cultural leadership and economic growth**

I would like to discuss two concepts, that is, of culture as a flag for leadership and culture as a benefit to the economy. These two concepts hold a very special dynamic that is self-generating/ self-reinforcing. In order to make a complete picture of the issues involved in cultural policy in the UK it is important for us to review the impact of the arts and culture beyond their relation with individual well-being. In countries like the UK, where an image of prestige and leadership has been built throughout the years surrounding its national cultural institutions, it is clear that part of the economy is moved by the popularity and global status of these institutions. The impact of these national institutions in the economy is mostly related to tourism and its potential as a source of employment. These two values given to culture are used as a way of making evident a more 'tangible' importance of the arts within the nation's interests. When a country's cultural institutions are referred to as 'cultural leads', this not only reflects on the country's standing in terms of quality of art displays (art museums and galleries) and their collections, but also on the image of respectability and intellectual leadership. The sustainment of this image of prestige becomes extremely important for cities like Edinburgh, where a large percentage of the economy's future growth is related to the city's 'cultural capital'. Mitch Barltrop has described it as 'the commercialisation of history through tourism and white-collar industry drives change in time, in order to sustain the city's contemporary economic viability as and inspiring capital'<sup>7</sup> he goes further on to say 'Edinburgh as a festival city is a commodity. The prioritisation of elitist memories is complicit in the process of forgetting the city's industrial past'<sup>8</sup>

Richard Florida is one of the author's that has evaluated the economic impact of the arts and culture. Although his work focuses on the United States and the wide grouping of what

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<sup>7</sup> Mitch Barltrop. 2012. *Edinburgh's Mythic Identity* p.23

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

he refers to as the 'creative class' that is of individuals that work within the creative industries, it is relevant when discussing the role of creative related industries in economic growth. His approach taps into the idea of creativity as being an inherent human ability, 'Each of us has creative potential that we love to exercise and that can be turned to valuable ends. Furthermore, creativity is the great leveller. It cannot be handed down, and it cannot be "owned" in the traditional sense. It defies gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and outward appearance'<sup>9</sup> His approach to creativity resembles the approach of the government with regard to culture, we might say that both regard creative related activities as inherently available to every human being. Florida goes on to say: 'Unlike traditional factors of production such as land or capital, creativity cannot be passed down from generation to generation. It has to be constantly fermented and reproduced in the firms, places and societies that use it'<sup>10</sup>. This is a reflection of the government's focus on education to enhance people's lives but also their future contribution to the nation's economic growth. Florida gives a way towards achieving the full potential? Of the benefits of the creative class and their productions, 'we need to shift both public and private funds away from investment in physical capital, towards investment in creative capital. The members of the creative class invest heavily in cultivating and nurturing their own creativity, recognizing what labour economists have long known: investments in their education and skill development are the most effective and highest-return investment they can make'<sup>11</sup> It is possible that the movement within UK cultural policy is related to this new look on the creative class' potential and benefit for governments. In Florida's view, the economy's focus on tapping into creativity 'creates an unparalleled opportunity to raise our living standards, built a more humane and sustainable economy, and make our lives more complete'<sup>12</sup> In his view the funding of creative people and their productions would eventually lead to an overall well-being of all citizens inscribed in the process.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Florida. 2004. *The rise of the creative class : and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. (xiv)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p. 318

<sup>11</sup> Richard Florida. 2004. *The rise of the creative class : and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life* p. 319

<sup>12</sup> Ibid (xiii)

## The Scottish case

At this moment I would like us to review the case of the Scottish government and look at how the relation between economic benefit and profit and social improvement unfolds.

If we are to look closely at some of the statements made by current Culture secretary, Fiona Hyslop and former MSP Minister for Europe, External affairs and Culture, Linda Fabiani, we will notice a shift in the discourse used around 2008 and the current time. Around the time when Fabiani was Minister, deep changes were taking place in the cultural sector in Scotland; it was around 2008-2009 that the merger between Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen gave way to Creative Scotland as a public body funded by the government which would 'cultivate and support the best of Scottish arts and culture and maximise the potential of Scotland's creative sector'<sup>13</sup> A central concept that was to emerge from The Arts Council England and then permeate Creative Scotland was that of 'creative industries'. The creative industries are described by the UK government as: 'a real success story' the text goes on to say, 'They are worth more than £36 billion a year; they generate £70,000 every minute for the UK economy; and they employ 1.5 million people in the UK. According to industry figures, the creative industries account for around £1 in every £10 of the UK's exports. With the right support, they have the potential to bring even more benefits to our culture and economy'<sup>14</sup> Although the creative industries refer to: architecture, crafts, computer games, design, designer fashion, film and video, music, performing arts, publishing/literature, software, TV and radio, and visual arts, this change did affect the way the government saw public art institutions such as museums and art galleries.

The main purpose of Creative Scotland was to 'maximise the economic potential of businesses within creative industries'<sup>15</sup>, in other words, it was created to help the creative industries improve their functioning as a true industry. The movement of looking at the arts as merit goods, that is, as goods whose consumption is 'deemed intrinsically desirable'<sup>16</sup> An example of this is given by Lambert Zuidervaart, who states that in settings 'where

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<sup>13</sup> Creative Scotland webpage

<sup>14</sup> UK Government webpage

<sup>15</sup> Creative Scotland webpage

<sup>16</sup> Sarah Selwood. 2001. *The UK cultural sector : profile and policy issues* p. 176

individuals, as members of the community, accept certain community values or preferences, even though their personal preferences might differ. Concern for maintenance of historical sites, respect for national holidays, regard for environment or learning and the arts are cases in point'<sup>17</sup> to another focused on the economic value and the arts as key players in economic growth, naturally inscribed the arts in the market's needs and desires. When the aim moved towards a more commercial/commodity view, the arts were placed under their scope and –as some of the members of these creative industries stated– were situated in a rat-race where the most profitable and economically viable would be sponsored and given validity for their work. The arts no longer held a privileged position in which they could avoid –to some degree– having to justify their existence. They were now part of the government's economic strategy to boost growth in Scotland and the UK, and within this new set of rules they were called out to show their worth, not in abstract and holistic terms but in real market/economic statistics and outcomes.

The current focus on Culture in Scotland is dramatically different, Fiona Hyslop in her speech made in Talbot Rice Gallery (June this year), clearly goes against the demand made by Culture Secretary for the UK government where she 'asked the culture sector to help her make the arguments about the economic impact of culture in the economic growth'<sup>18</sup>. In Hyslop's view, the Scottish government already accepts the public subsidy for the arts. She goes on to say: 'I don't need or want the culture or heritage sector to make a new economic or social case to justify public support for their work'<sup>19</sup>. It is a very different approach than that of the former minister. One of the reasons for this change could be the on-going debate about the role of culture and cultural heritage from the emergence of the term 'creative industries'. Hyslop's speech is full of sentences where the 'intrinsic' value of art seems to overrule the economic value, she states that 'the true value of art' is that which 'benefits our quality of life, and our well-being'<sup>20</sup>, it is made evident by her speech that art should not be viewed merely as a commodity, but rather as a social binding that enhances 'our hearts, our souls and our essence'<sup>21</sup>. We might say that she stands on the populist/ altruist approach to culture from the government; it is only expected that further on the word

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<sup>17</sup> Lambert Zuidevaart. 2001. *Art in public : politics, economics, and a democratic culture* p. 32

<sup>18</sup> Fiona Hyslop. 2013. *Past, Present & Future: Culture & Heritage in an Independant Scotland*

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

'access' reappears. 'Access' in official discourse, implies 'culture for everyone' that places special focus on 'the public, the audience', the new approach looks at the public as a partner in the construction of meaning; it highlights the importance of the individual and communities in cultural appropriation and their relations with their institutions. As author Emily Keaney has put it 'Analysis of the 2002 European Social Survey shows that cultural participation appears to have a significant impact on levels of trust, both in terms of trust in other people and in government institutions. Countries with higher levels of cultural engagement also have higher levels of social and institutional trust'<sup>22</sup>

The focus is no longer fixed in economic growth but in reception growth. Paradoxically, the intent of avoiding economic competition led to a new type of competition, that of social impact mostly reflected in visitor numbers. National publicly funded institutions are now asked to show their worth through visitor numbers as well as outreach and educational programs. In this new playing field, quality and possibility of receiving funding is to be measured and achieved under the general rule of accessibility and social impact.

Under this idea, the individual becomes the centre of the objective and the cluster of individuals (communities) become corner stones in the cultural discourse. It is predictable that this altruist discourse slowly leans towards the use of 'nation' as binding discursive material. In her speech, Hyslop refers to the 'nation' as a group that is to be naturally moved towards the enjoyment, appreciation and involvement in culture. The nation becomes the flag for community cohesion and key in the construction of a social fabric and identity. The nationalist approach in the government's statements helps activate group thinking and identification, which would resonate with the ideas of 'open doors' and community construction in culture. In this way, it is more effective to involve and bring everyone around this artificially constructed common goal of reclaiming and appropriating culture as one's own, not as a gift received by the higher classes that are usually the ones that enjoy the best of culture.

As I will argue later on, the Titian campaign moves between two approaches of the value of art and culture. The first represents the altruist view of the social importance of art as seen in Hyslop's statements. On the one hand, this is portrayed as a social binder and life

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<sup>22</sup> Emily Keaney. 2006. *From Access to Participation: Cultural policy and civic renewal* p. 23

enhancer where the concept of nation will be used many times and on the other, as relevant for the economy which is represented by Fabiani's approach to art and culture; that is, of an intelligent investment in the country's future as well as economic benefits in the current time -seen in rise of tourism and the maintenance of cultural leadership-. The second, relates to the presence of private interests both economic and political, some of which will be discussed in the second chapter. It is important for us to realise that discourses on culture -as well as specific cases like the Titian campaign- do not work solely in one side of the spectrum, but rather move between the opposing sides of the spectrum.



## Critical approaches to 'official' discourse

There is an assumption underlying State policy-making regarding arts funding that there is a universal need for art, and a further assumption that it will be regarded as a benevolent act to satisfy that need on the democratic basis of universal inclusivity of provision. None of this takes into account the fact that there is nothing essentially benevolent or democratic about either the work of the artist or the work of art, and this remains the case even if benevolent or democratic causes are claimed for the work.<sup>23</sup>

I would like us to look at the other side of the coin. In the previous chapter we reviewed the 'official' position in regards to culture through three ideas that pinpoint the cultural policy in the UK. In order to develop a critical approach to our final case study, I would like us to review some of the critical responses that have emerged in face of this 'Great art for everyone' official discourse of the national government. In this chapter, I will refer to authors that have directly contested the current 'culture and accessibility' cultural policy in the UK, as well as the work of previous scholars that have researched the social obstacles of cultural reception and appropriation, such as Pierre Bourdieu and for some recent developments of Bourdieu, I will look at the work of Bridget Fowle. For a critical analysis of the funding structures of public art institutions, I will use the work of Chin-Tao Wu and her research on the influence of private funding in the arts.

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<sup>23</sup>Mark Wallinger, Mary Warnock. 2000. *Art for all? Their policies and our culture* p. 88

## Art's inherent value

As we saw on the previous chapter, the government's view on culture is based on the idea of culture's inherent ability to improve people's lives. I argue that this approach holds in itself one of the key problems that impede cultural democracy. The problem emerges when different types of artistic production are merged into a single project and given similar solutions. I am referring to the ambivalent discourse that institutions use when they refer to 'access' [and 'participation/experience']. This ambivalence has been explained by Bourdieu in the following way: 'Intellectuals and artists are thus divided between their interest in cultural pros elitism, that is, winning a market by widening their audience, which inclines them to favour popularization, and concern for cultural distinction, the only objective basis of their rarity; and their relationship with everything concerned with the 'democratization of culture' is marked by a deep ambivalence which may be manifested in a dual discourse on the relations between the institutions of cultural diffusion and the public',<sup>24</sup>

I would like us to look at two statements made by the ACE in 2009 and 2008 that exemplify this ambivalence:

'We work to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives. As the national development agency for the arts, we support a range of artistic activities from theatre to music, literature to dance, photography to digital art, carnival to crafts'<sup>25</sup>

'Arts need to be of the highest quality for people to engage with them'<sup>26</sup>

Both of these statements were made referring to the 'Great art for everyone' motto; however there are some differences that need to be acknowledged. The first statement refers to the objective of providing direct experiences with art. It refers to a wide variety of

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<sup>24</sup> Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste* p. 229

<sup>25</sup> Arts Council England. 2009. *Finances at glance* p.6

<sup>26</sup> Alan Davey, 2008. *Artistic Ambition* p.4

arts including crafts; I believe it is when referring to these experiences that all of the inherent benefits of art come into play. That is, of spiritually regenerating communities, emotional escape and so on. But when talking about the 'highest quality' or 'getting the cultural offer (five hours per week of high quality arts and culture for every child and young person) right'<sup>27</sup> it is referring to 'high art'. Crafts and high art stand on different grounds in terms of 'access', while one is dependent on the disposition of the participant and the available materials— it is an open activity— the other, requires the audience to possess certain codes to communicate with it. Codes that are acquired through repetitive exposure to the art, the institutions holding it and the discourses weaved by the specific discipline. The obstacles that 'access' faces in front of high art are completely different than the ones in crafts and other applied arts. We could identify the obstacles of the former as social and deeply related with the Bourdieu's concepts of: cultural capital, habitus and taste.

When Bourdieu discusses the act of appropriating cultural goods, he notes that different set of rules apply to other types of goods such as cars, design, wine and food. As he puts it: 'If, among all these fields of possible, none is more obviously predisposed to express social differences than the world of luxury goods, and, more particularly, cultural goods, this is because the relationship of distinction is objectively inscribed within it, and is reactivated, intentionally or not, in each act of consumption, through the instruments of economic and cultural appropriation which it requires.'<sup>28</sup> He goes on to say 'because the appropriation of cultural products presupposes dispositions and competences which are not distributed universally (although they have the appearance of innateness), these products are subject to exclusive appropriation, material or symbolic, and, functioning as cultural capital (objectified or internalized), they yield a profit of distinction, proportionate to the rarity of the means required to appropriate them, and a profit in legitimacy, the profit par excellence, which consists in the fact of feeling justified in being (what is one), being what is the right to be'<sup>29</sup>

Cultural capital is one of the reasons why the government's aim is to offer 'Great art for

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<sup>27</sup> Alan Davey, 2008. *Artistic Ambition* p.4

<sup>28</sup> Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste* p. 226

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste* p. 228

everyone'. It is considered that 'great art' is the holder of most of the intrinsic beneficial attributes given to art and that engaging with high quality cultural goods will yield all of the benefits. However, as Bourdieu saw it, the attributes will not surrender to any viewer; they require specific codes to access them. Here is where taste and habitus come into play.

Bridget Fowle has explained the relation between habitus and taste as 'Tastes might be systematically elaborated in the areas considered 'high' because they are more abstract and pure, such as for some types of music, but they are still subject to the same oppositions that prevail in the arena of more sensuous pleasure. The main source of these tastes or needs is the habitus, a set of attitudes engrained in agents so early that they acquire an unconscious compulsive force.'<sup>30</sup> This means that taste is ingrained in our habitus which is constructed from an early age by all that surrounds us. In the case of high art, it is through an early exposure to art that the inherent codes will be naturalised, leading some individuals to the feeling of entitlement and ease of inhabiting the world of 'high art'. The habitus of the aesthetic gaze, that is, of an engrained appreciation of cultural goods, leads to the creation of the idea of 'love at first sight' when one is exposed to cultural goods. It is these concepts and beliefs that underlie the government's discourse. By assuming that art will give access to everyone just by overcoming physical and economic barriers, it is perpetuating the idea that aesthetic disposition is something that every human being possesses, a gift of nature.

Bourdieu has opposed this belief as 'the encounter with a work of art is not 'love at first sight' as is generally supposed, and the act of empathy, *Einfühlung*, which is the art-lover's pleasure, presupposes an act of cognition, a decoding operation, which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement, a cultural code'<sup>31</sup> The individuals whose habitus was not constructed/developed for the specific type of communication that 'high art' demands will be left with a sense of discomfort and social awkwardness that has been discussed in the previous chapter.

The government's approach to 'great art' as something that can be consumed and appropriated by everyone as a natural gift, underplays the core of the problem; that is, the difference between aesthetic gaze –associated with serious pleasure<sup>32</sup>– and the naïve gaze –

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<sup>30</sup> Bridget Fowler. 1997. *Pierre Bourdieu and cultural theory : critical investigations* p. 45

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste* p. 3

<sup>32</sup> Bridget Fowler. 1997. *Pierre Bourdieu and cultural theory : critical investigations* p. 47

associated with the simple sensuous charms of popular entertainment<sup>33</sup>-. Thus perpetuating the impossibility of access for people that have not acquired the habitus of aesthetic gaze.

We might also say that although the government and its representatives want people to engage with the finer things in life, it is within this delimitation of what is 'great' that the evasive obstacle to access appears. If we look at some of the surveys undertaken by the government, we notice that they have shown that some people are just not interested in 'great art'. Besides feeling that it is not for them, sometimes they simply do not see the relevance of 'great art' in their live and their reality. Instead of addressing the issue directly and asking these communities what type of art they would they be interested in and like to engage with, the governments reply seems to take a paternalist position that impedes the audience in making their own choices in the culture they want to engage with. As Nicholas Murray has put it: 'My criticism of the term 'accessibility is part of this critique of doubtful populism that tries to second-guess public preferences instead of providing real opportunities for choice as a dynamic democratic culture should' <sup>34</sup> By robbing the audience of real choice and using a paternalistic approach to cultural access, the government is partly feeding -in the long term- the social gap that they were trying to overcome in the first place.

When the individuals that possess the proper knowledge 'the elite' decide what is worthy of being exposed to the masses, they are implicitly imposing their own superiority in regards to their audience. We might say that in order to make these decisions, they stand apart from the uneducated and naive and patiently lead the way to enlightenment brought by great art. I believe this is where the tensions between populism and elitism emerge.

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<sup>33</sup> Bridget Fowler. 1997. *Pierre Bourdieu and cultural theory : critical investigations* p. 47

<sup>34</sup> Nicholas Murray in *Art for all? Their policies and our culture* p. 60

## Public or private interests?

Now, I would like to refer to another central idea in the UK cultural policy: culture as a benefit to the economy. Culture and artistic productions are immersed in a market, as objects that exist in the world, they interact and function as commodities that have value beyond the inherent ability of improving human beings. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the current cultural policy treats art works as common goods that work as sources of economic opportunities for the nation as a whole. However, if we look closely we will see that private interests are also part of the normal movement of art in the market.

First of all we should remember that in the case of NGS that the most important pieces of the collection are still privately owned; such is the case of the Bridgewater collection. The collection holds three Raphael's, four Titian's and eight Poussin's. This means that although the works are on display to the public, in practical and legal terms they do not belong to the 'public'. This makes art galleries like the NGS the official guardians of someone else's property. Taking into account insurance and other expenses that come with owning a valuable work of art, the government has created a deal with private collectors; they fund all expenses of keeping the works safe and give special tax incentives to collectors while they get to display the works to the public in return. Now we should ask: what does each part win in this deal? On the one hand, the galleries get to display masterpieces in their collection which feeds the prestige of their institution and in return this image of prestige maintains cultural leadership that raises tourism, bringing more revenue and employment for the nation. On the other hand, the collector is given a safe place to keep his/her assets and a more intangible gain: status distinction.

The merging of public and private interests is not only present in the patron's loans of works; it is also evident in the presence of private corporations in the board of trustees and funding bodies of the public art institutions. If we look at the case of NGS we will notice that more than half of the trustees (7 out of 12) have worked or still hold important positions in banks and investment companies; such is the case of chairman Ben Thomson who has

worked for Noble Group, a UK investment bank. In the case of NGL, half of the 14 trustees have a banking background. If we look at NGS and NGL's lists of donors, we will find that among their supporters are banks and companies like Lloyds, Turcan Cornell (a company that provides wealth and investment management), BNY Mellon, Baillie Gifford and Rathbones all investment companies. Now we might ask: what do these individuals and companies gain from their involvement in these art institutions? A possible answer is given by Chin- Tao Wu:

Art has long been patronised by those with power and status in society, and artistic products have thus always functioned as a status symbol as well as objects with market value... Although 'status distinction', according to Max Weber, is not always linked with 'class distinction', they are evidently identical in this instance. This is particularly true in the sense that these corporate elites, through the mediation of the popular press, intentionally or unintentionally, have cultivated the image of being art patrons—of being modern-day Medici<sup>35</sup>

Although the enhancement of 'class distinction' is a central reason for private presence in public art institutions, it is also a matter of networking. By being located within these prestigious culture institutions, trustees as well as corporations gain access to the selected circle of their equals; that is, of other collectors, investors and members of the elite. Through the special events held within these institutions, new connections will be made and possible new investors will be allured by insurance companies into bringing their assets into a specific company.

By highlighting this information, I do not imply that public art institutions should only be funded by public bodies and I do not make a judgement based on the presence of private funding. At this point in time it has become evident that if public institutions wish to be sustainable they need to look beyond public funding. What I do wish to bring to the table, is the fact that such private presence exists, and that it should not be hidden under the rug or overlooked. It is important to realise that museums and galleries have the responsibility of catering to the public need but they also need to cater to their patrons. For example, NGL holds 'corporate entertaining' for corporate members and sponsors, contrastingly, these

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<sup>35</sup> Chin-Tao Wu. *Privatising culture : corporate art intervention since the 1980s* p. 11

events are advertised as 'exclusive privilege' and 'exclusive benefits'. I will not go into the discussion of determining whose interests are more relevant when making big decisions since this is not the aim of this dissertation and would require an inside look on the relations between galleries and their patrons. Bankers and individuals involved with private business in both the board of trustees as well as funding bodies should make us question till what extent is this solely for the benefit of the people. As Chin Tao Wu has put it,

The significant inroads that the business sector has made into the cultural arena since the 1980s cannot simply be explained away by invoking the amorphous motive of 'enlightenment self-interest'. Instead business intervention in the arts has to be seen and understood in terms of political power within the modern state' it is through their presence in culture that private companies and individuals acquire cultural capital that will later 'be transformed into political power, either openly or otherwise, to serve business's own specific interests'<sup>36</sup>

It is through the acknowledgement of the presence of private interests in the culture debate that we can start making a critical review of the official side and see some of the interests that are hidden to the superficial gaze.

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<sup>36</sup> Chin-Tao Wu. *Privatising culture : corporate art intervention since the 1980s* p. 16



## Discourse analysis

At first glance, the Titian campaign would appear as any other campaign to raise money for a cause, but its controversial splash and the debate that emerged in the public space made it an interesting case study for this dissertation. The campaign moved between two types of discourse. The first one was that of the connoisseurs and the elite - the upper classes - represented by big names from the art world, government and private institutions and even popular celebrities. The second one was a nationalist discourse that summoned all the media and 'the nation'. The large amount of money at stake - 50m pounds for the first painting, and approximately 95m for both paintings and security of the collection for 21 years – combined with the fact that a big percentage of it came from public money - government coffers and tax revenue - built up the tensions during the campaign period. I believe that all the inherent tensions in the Titian campaign make it a perfect contemporary example of the two forces that struggle and inhabit the field of art in public institutions: elitism and populism. In this chapter we hope to distill all the obstacles and contradictions within the government's cultural policy that have been discussed in the previous chapters and see how they are reflected in public art institutions such as the NGS and the NGL and the decisions made during the Titian campaign.

In this chapter we analyze The Titian campaign through the use of discourse analysis. We will evaluate the press releases and documents that supported this infrastructure and make an attempt to read between the lines in order to ask questions about the language and concepts used in the campaign. Through this analysis, we will be able to see the contrasting concepts and positions that lie beneath the surface of the press releases. Although it was quite interesting to read some of the responses that the campaign received in newspapers and tabloids, I will not give these texts a lot of attention apart from mentioning some of the relevant responses. At this point a reader might ask the following questions: if you have been building an argument in the previous chapters about the importance of giving a voice to the ones that do not have it, then isn't your position perpetuating the role of the elite, the connoisseurs? By choosing to look past the responses of the general public, aren't you downplaying the voices of the 'unfamiliar' 'unengaged' side of the public? I would like to

clarify here that even though I agree with the points raised by the aforementioned questions and am aware of the criticism my argument might face because of this decision, it is the limited space available and time constraints rather than any insidious motive on my part, which prevented the inclusion of all the documents and responses. In the face of these constraints, I bring only the most essential to the table. I believe that by using the space available for a critical discussion of the sources, and by raising some questions that finally meet with the public's responses, this will be a more complete and critically thorough dissertation. I will focus on three statements that reflect the evolution of the discourse through the campaign. The first one is the statement made on 27 August 2008, then a second one, revealing the first big donor, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, on 19 November 2008 and the last one recounting the final outcome made on 2 February 2009.

## **Private Ownership**

The first joint press release was made on behalf of the National Galleries of Scotland, the National Gallery London and the Duke of Sutherland on 27 August 2008. The headline said: 'National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery of London join forces to secure the future of old master collection for the UK'<sup>37</sup>. Most of the statement focused mainly on describing the importance of the Bridgewater collection to the UK. We can gauge the aim and hierarchies displayed in the whole text from the second line in the statement: 'Joint statement on behalf of National Galleries of Scotland, the National Gallery London and the Duke of Sutherland'<sup>38</sup>. A private entity (private collector) is put at the same level as two of the most important national galleries in the UK. Here it is very important that we do not overlook this hint but rather look for traces that might explain why the three were put on an equal footing.

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<sup>37</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2008. *National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery of London join forces to secure the future of old master collection for the UK*. Press release

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

The issue of ownership is central to this first statement. We will begin to see it unfold in the second paragraph where the beginnings of public display of the Bridgewater collection are explained. The text goes on to explain how the Bridgewater collection is connected with a national institution NGS but also a national audience since 1945, hence it's national importance. Later on, the statement shows the link between the Bridgewater collection and the Duke of Sutherland and his family. When referring to the works, the text no longer does so under the terms 'masterpieces' but as 'overall assets' and 'selected pictures for sale to the nation'. These sentences connect us with the fourth paragraph that introduces the price of the transaction: 50m and the conditions.

By the use of the words 'assets' and 'pictures for sale', the release makes evident the status of the art works in the world. The Titians are works that are not valuable solely for their inherent worth as objects of aesthetic pleasure and later guide to enlightenment, but also as commodities that can be easily put on the open market at the whim of the Duke. If we contrast this idea with another sentence - 'It (The Bridgewater collection) forms *the core* of the National Gallery of Scotland's world famous displays of European Art'<sup>39</sup> - the interaction between them reveals the vulnerable position that public art galleries such as the NGS face in front of their patrons. The illusion created by the gallery of a place where objects are timeless and accessible to everyone that walks into the gallery is contrasted by the blunt fact that a large part of the NGS collection (or at least the most important works) is actually privately owned. Here, the halo built around the objects is broken and the concept of giving people 'access' to 'great art' is put in a world with a different set of rules. It is no longer simply a matter of creating campaigns that educate and bring the public closer to the works but also an effort to keep the works in the institutions, that is through catering to the private collectors needs and requests but also in cases like the Titian campaign in using public money to keep the 'assets' available for the wider public. The tension between a private collector that is simply keeping his private assets in a safe place for the time being, and the public, to whom the collection was supposed to 'belong to', at least symbolically, creates a conflict for the NGS. Under the pressure of the government cultural policy of 'access', the galleries are put in a position of submission where they have a very limited

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<sup>39</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2008. *National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery of London join forces to secure the future of old master collection for the UK*. Press release

space to argue or debate against either the government or the patron. It is evident that the stakes were very high for NGS – when the possibility of losing such a collection is raised- It would have been a big loss for both the public and the NGS’ prestige and survival as a public institution.

Looking at the history of the Bridgewater collection and its relation to the NGS, we can connect the ideas of cultural heritage and private ownership. The Bridgewater collection is a private collection dating back to 1706 when it was owned by the Duc d'Orleans and held at the Palais Royal in Paris. After the French revolution, the collection was transported to London and bought by Francis Egerton (3rd Duke of Bridgewater). Later, the collection was handed down from generation to generation till it eventually made it to the public space in 1945 when it was lodged in the NGS as a long term loan. It is important for us to note that Britain and especially Scotland did not have major royal collections to feed their first public museums, hence their resources had to be focused on the purchase of objects from outside collections and through their share of looted objects from around the world as well as holding of this loans became so important. Carol Duncan has exposed it in the following way

By the late eighteenth century, however, the absence of a ceremonially important royal collection was more than made up for by those of the aristocracy. In fact, the British art market actually became the most active in eighteenth-century Europe as both the landed aristocracy and the newly arrived commercial class sought the distinctive signs of gentleman status. Whether defending older class boundaries or attempting to breach them, men of wealth deemed it socially expedient to collect and display art, especially paintings<sup>40</sup>

As discussed before, the emergence of these private collections into the public realm was not solely a matter of altruism; it was also a matter of prestige and reinstating power positions. By exposing private property to the public, the owners of such collections would be able to display their treasures - notice the repetitive use of the words ‘heritage treasures’ - throughout the campaign statements. Through these ‘heritage treasures’ the power of the collectors - commercial, political and social - was displayed, denoting and implying that the possession of such objects would also lead to the possession of the

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<sup>40</sup> Carol Duncan. 1995, *Civilizing rituals: inside public art museums* p.35

knowledge of different types of cultures, times and places. As Eilean Hopper- Greenhill has put it

The “disciplinary museum” gave rise to a complex interaction of both the new and the old subject positions that positioned the “visitor” as beneficiary (the population enabled to know); the “curator” as knowing subject with specialist expertise (who enables the knowing of others); and the subject emperor, newly poised as the source of public benefaction and liberation. This new position, however, could not help but recall those older renditions of the prince who represented the world, which centered himself, through the organization of meaningful objects<sup>41</sup>

In another 2008 press release under the headline: ‘10 million lifeline granted from National Heritage Memorial Fund to help save Titian masterpiece for the nation’<sup>42</sup>, it is stated in one of the notes to editors at the end of the text: ‘it (the Bridgewater collection) immeasurably enriches the appeal and status of the national galleries of Scotland as a center of cultural excellence.’<sup>43</sup> Although the headline states the ‘lifeline’ was granted to save the Titian masterpiece for the nation, the only parts of the text that somehow relate to this ‘nation’ are the two sections where there is an allusion to future generations and how the ‘keeping of the Bridgewater collection on view in Scotland’<sup>44</sup> will make it ‘available for the inspiration and enjoyment of the present and future generations’<sup>45</sup>. Although at the end (in the notes to editors) the statement supplies some information about the collection, it does not explain any relevant issues of the work, like theme or importance of the artist or even some historical context. We must ask ourselves, when Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, says: ‘We hope this persuades others to dig deep to make this dream a reality’<sup>46</sup> - whose pockets is she referring to? And whose dream is this?

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<sup>41</sup> Eilean Hooper- Greenhill. 1992, *Museums and the shaping of knowledge* p. 168

<sup>42</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2008. *10 million lifeline granted from National Heritage Memorial Fund to help save Titian masterpiece for the nation*. Press release

<sup>43</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2009. *Diana and Actaeon is secured for the Nation*. Press release

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

If we go back to the idea of prestige and value, cultural as well as monetary, given to these works, we will notice another interesting contradiction further along in the statement made in 27 August 2008. When the press release refers to the works, it first states the components of the collection (the most noticeable ones) and highlights the importance of the collection by stating that 'it forms the core of the National Gallery of Scotland's world - famous displays of European art'<sup>47</sup> the words 'masterpieces' 'world famous' and 'old master's' paintings would imply that the importance of the work is mainly due to its authorship, that of Titian. However, if we scan the complete text we will not find any explanation of Titian as an artist and the historical context of the works. The only line that would make some reference to the author -that might help us locate within a specific historical context- is found in the fifth paragraph where it is said that the works 'represent the highpoint of Italian Renaissance art'<sup>48</sup>.

The fact that there is almost no information given by the statement, in terms of the work's theme and context and any key information about the artist, clearly assumes that the reader knows who Titian is and is familiar with his work, as well as works of Rembrandt and Poussin's. For those who are not familiar, the only information they might be able to use to measure the worth and importance of the works is the 'net price' of 50m given by the Duke of 50m and the self-reinforcing validation given by the words: 'masterpiece' and 'old master'. Now, this does not pose a problem if we infer that this campaign is solely directed to the art connoisseurs and art lovers. This first statement does not make clear who they are addressing as possible donors, it simply states that: 'their [of the works] acquisition by both institutions [NGS and NGL] would be a historic event'<sup>49</sup> and that 'we are delighted to be working in a close collaboration with the Duke and our colleagues in London in order to achieve this'<sup>50</sup> From this we could assume that this is just an informative statement and that it is a matter that the two Galleries and the Duke will solve amongst themselves. However, when we start looking at later statements and the discourse used in them very interesting tensions and contradictions start emerging.

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<sup>47</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2008. *National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery of London join forces to secure the future of old master collection for the UK*. Press release

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

## Nation appeal

Although the first statement was very careful when it referred to its audience- usually doing in it in terms of 'the UK' and 'Scotland'- in the later months the discourse would begin to change drastically. On 18 November 2008, the National Galleries of Scotland, The National Gallery London and the National Heritage Memorial Fund released a statement that read: '10 million lifeline granted from National Heritage Memorial Fund to help save Titian masterpiece for the nation'. I would like us to begin our approach to this statement by looking at three key words used in this headline: 'nation', 'saving' and 'life line'. With these three words we will be able to navigate our way through the text.

When we talk about 'nation' we might be referring to an imaginary construction/boundary that unites and separates human beings/citizens. These boundaries may be defined by a geographic characteristic, for example, one might refer to a group of people born within a geographical/political delimitation called Scotland as part of the Scottish nation. Boundaries can also be drawn by other set of rules that are related to culture, that is, a sense of belonging and family heritage. It is very important that we remember that the concept of 'nation' works on two levels, one is a state dimension that regards the nation as large group of people governed by the same regulations and rights and the smaller individual scale that is mostly related to our individual construction of identity. This individual identity is permeated and shaped by our context, our family, the place where we live, the city and the people living in it.

If we look at the use of the word 'nation' in the NGS and NG statements we notice that what they refer to as 'nation' is a deeply ambivalent term. The statement not only leaves the question of who are they referring to completely unanswered but also what is more haunting is that it absolutely underplays and ignores the specific problems that emerge in the UK context. This was a clear red flag for any careful reader. In order to understand the tensions of constructing a national identity in the UK, I would like us to look briefly at the case of Scotland, which is at the most problematic stage to use the word 'nation'.

Migration movements in Scotland have been present from the beginning of the formation of the country. One of the major migrations in modern times was that of the mid nineteenth century, when the first wave of Irish migrants came to Scotland. The highest point of Irish migration was by the time of the great famine, which was 'caused by the failure of successive Irish potato crops between 1845 and 1849'<sup>51</sup>, leaving millions of Irish poor and dying of starvation. When Irish people began looking for new opportunities of employment, Scotland and the possibility of finding a job during harvest in the highlands turned up as a lucrative opportunity. Although this type of work was seasonal, it quickly became a competing ground between highlanders and Irish community. A central issue of conflict was the slow expansion of sheep farming in the highlands and the massive use of land for this sole purpose. When the big land owners – curiously among them the Sutherland family- started evicting farmers from their lands, complete communities were left without jobs. Irish migration became unwanted because of the cheap labor and other factors like religion which became a battle ground between an increasingly protestant country and the catholic Irish migrants. However, it was culture that became a middle ground for the two communities, football being the highest exponent of this. Although football was not a traditional Celtic game, the new immigrants where so enthusiastic about it that even through there were clear bans against Irish catholic players playing the sport<sup>52</sup>, the Celtic football club emerged as a 'powerful symbol of Irish catholic sporting success'<sup>53</sup>.

Now, if we look at other immigrant groups, like the Italians we will notice that different kind of interactions took place. Although, 'during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Italians in Scotland were largely respected as educated, skilled and artistic people'<sup>54</sup> known as 'skilled craftsmen who set up their businesses manufacturing looking-glasses, barometers and thermometers, like Gerletti in Glasgow'<sup>55</sup>, it was in the second half of the nineteenth century and especially after the 'second world war that there was a change in the pattern of migration from Italy to Britain. Conditions in parts of Italy, particularly the south, had become desperate. Poverty and unemployment had reached a level where emigration was

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<sup>51</sup> Suzanne Audrey. 2000, *Multiculturalism in practice: Irish, Jewish, Italian, and Pakistani migration to Scotland* p 15

<sup>52</sup> Ibid p. 23

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Ibid p.33

<sup>55</sup> Ibid



considered not so much a means of economic improvement but of physical survival'<sup>56</sup> . During this time, Italian immigrants arrived in very different circumstances, most of them being unskilled peasants who were no longer able to supply for their own family. Unlike Irish migration, that was based on an offer of an 'expanding industrial economy'<sup>57</sup> , Italian migration was a chain migration. It resulted from the development of expanding Italian businesses, most of them being cafes, ice cream parlors or fish and chips shops. Other jobs in mining and railway construction were also undertaken by the Italian migrants; however they were not as popular as their involvement with the catering business. In the case of the Italian community it was once again religion and Italy's fascist government at the time that made migrants easy targets for segregation.

Other, more recent migrations, such as the Pakistanis to Scotland have their origins in the beginnings of the British Empire, most specifically in relation to the east India Company, founded in 1599 in England. It was in the recruitment of Indian seamen that the first migrations occurred. The seamen were hired as cheaper work labor and the harsh treatment sometimes resulted in men escaping the ship at British borders for a temporary or even permanent residence. These 'Indian' immigrants became 'Pakistanis' when 'the new state of Pakistan was established and India was granted independence'<sup>58</sup> it was when Britain started to dismantle its empire that in 1984 the British nationality act 'allowed citizens from commonwealth countries to acquire United Kingdom citizenship through a relatively simple process of registration'<sup>59</sup>. Between 1950 and 1955 'the total number of south Asians in Scotland' rose to a little over double of the 600 residents in the latter years.

Now if we think of a society composed by people from such diverse cultural backgrounds, it seems very complicated and naïve to simply make connections between these groups based on their inhabitation of a territory (The UK, or Scotland). This oversimplification could lead to a very narrow and limited construction of a common national identity. However, for the sake of argument if we move forward, we must ask: who was the Titian campaign addressing? When they referred to the nation, were they referring to all the groups

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<sup>56</sup> Suzanne Audrey. 2000, *Multiculturalism in practice: Irish, Jewish, Italian, and Pakistani migration to Scotland* p. 36

<sup>57</sup> Ibid p. 34

<sup>58</sup> Ibid p.63

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

mentioned above and people born in the country? Or just Scottish and/or English? In either case, where they including all of the ethnic minorities? Or where they just addressing Italian immigrants and 'pure' bred Scottish and English?

In the case that the Titian campaign was addressing all immigrants, local, second generations and so on, what would be the possible connections between every single one of them and the two Titian's -*Diana and Actaeon* and *Diana and Callisto*- besides a 'direct link' between the paintings and the Italian community it seems slightly strange to address for example the Asian community and tell them that an Italian renaissance painting will help enhance and somehow will help construct their identity. By this, I do not intend to say that identity construction only happens in an isolated manner. The construction of an identity through opposition is also possible, but the issue here is the way the campaign was set up. The Titian campaign seemed to quiet down -if not to overlook- completely the problematic that emerge from using the word 'nation' in such a vague way. Especially when referring to a heavily mixed, multicultural society.

Although there are no clear answers for this questions, in part due to the enclosure? Of information from the campaign by both galleries, I argue that the Titian campaign addressed the public not as 'public' or 'visitors' in their statements because that would imply that this was a global fundraising campaign, which would diffuse the fundraising effort. In order to appeal and keep relevance they had to choose a large enough concepts to allude to as many people as possible but that would still be able to speak individually to the audience, moving them to donate. A sense of community pride was to be activated through nationalist discourse on 'saving "cultural heritage' thus, moving the readers, big private donors and the national government to answer the calling.

## The National Heritage Memorial fund and the British Empire

The NHMF made the first big donation of 10m pounds to the Titian campaign. Through the press releases we see how the specific discourse used by funding bodies such as the NHMF will permeate the whole discourse of the Titian campaign. The NHMF is a fund of 'last resort to save items of outstanding importance to the nation's heritage that are either at risk or possess a marked memorial character'<sup>60</sup>. With its origins linked to the raise of public appreciation of national heritage after the Second World War, the nationalist and war related discourse is deeply rooted in the institution's aims. The idea of saving 'heritage at risk of loss to the nation'<sup>61</sup>, links to an Imperial/colonial idea that fueled a large part of the looting in other nations to build up large collections in other 'more civilized' countries. Museums like the Louvre or the British Museum are perfect examples of this.

By creating a common goal of saving an object of some hidden menace, in the case of the Titians it is not of an 'uncivilized' nation but of the dangers of the art market, the NGS and NG were justifying the expenditure of a large sum of public money by moving citizens to believe that what was being done and the decision being made were for the best, not only for the 'heritage treasures', but for the nation as a whole. This type of discourse is not new and can be traced back to 1902, as Annie E. Coombes has put it, it was around this time that the 'rhetoric of education and national coherence which was to become a hallmark of the museum's appeal to the public'<sup>62</sup> she goes further on to say, 'contending parliamentary parties promoted the concept of a homogeneous national identity and unity within Britain. Imperialism was one of the dominant ideologies mobilized to this end'<sup>63</sup>. What is more interesting is looking at other previous campaigns similar to our case study and find the same nationalist discourse in many of them. One example would be Edouard Manet's *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* bought in 2012 by the Ashmolean Museum, This purchase is referred to in the UK governments website as: 'Manet portrait saved for the nation'. For a

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<sup>60</sup> National Heritage Memorial Fund. website

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

<sup>62</sup> Bettina Carbonell. 2012, *Museum studies: an anthology of contexts* p. 232

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*

closer example we should just remember Fiona Hyslop's speech that was discussed in the first chapter, she uses the same rhetoric to summon the people and to create an idea of community that is joined and works together to achieve cultural greatness.

## **Educating the public**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, the NGS and NG announced the 'unveiling of Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* in Room one of the National Gallery in London' the painting was to be displayed for four weeks in London and then return to Edinburgh. The education campaign had started. In order to create a massive audience and attract as many people as possible to the campaign, both galleries created this event that would start making their 'wider' audience familiar with the work that was to be bought. The display of *Diana and Actaeon* in London was accompanied with information about the work: provenance, theme and the author. The work was no longer immersed in obscurity for the general 'none educated' public and it was made 'accessible' to all visitors of the National Gallery.

If we think about the notion of educating through cultural institutions, we will notice that it has been present in the beginnings of major public museums. The main aim of this idea was to 'afford the diffusion of instruction and rational amusement among the mass of the people'<sup>64</sup> and was fostered by the National Gallery and the Victoria and Albert museum from their opening in the 1850's.<sup>65</sup> The NGS is another example of this 'educating the masses' rhetoric. Although the initial aim was to build an institution where merchants and craft makers could learn about design and raise their level of taste, and improve their competitiveness in the wider market. It was when a wider public started attending the Galleries that the focus was put on the Galleries as places where enlightenment was obtained. Coombes sees this discourse as 'designed to unite all classes in the defense of nation and

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<sup>64</sup> Bettina Carbonell. 2012, *Museum studies: an anthology of contexts* p. 238

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*

empire by focusing its campaign on convincing the working classes that their interests were best served by the development and expansion of the empire'<sup>66</sup>. To say it in other words, it was through elevating the individual and the community that the idea of the empire/nation would be enhanced and elevated –both socially and economically- in the same way.

Now, we should ask ourselves: how was this educating process constructed? What type of notions and concepts came into play? In art museums and galleries where private collections had been made public, like the NGS, NG, Louvre, the educating process came from the top down. It was the owner of the collection who decided how to display his treasures to the public. When public art institutions were opened, a set of rules of behavior within the space were to be followed. While the rhetoric of the private collection was that of displaying personal treasures and assets in a building made specifically for the private collection; the discourse only changed very slightly when it was the state that was made guardian of private collections, the words were no longer assets but heritage treasures, even further, national heritage treasures. By creating the idea that the objects symbolically belonged to everyone, the nation was able to educate their audiences in the proper ways of behaving and living.

If we look at the Titian campaign, and try to answer the same questions we see that the statement released in 2 February 2009 right after the first goal was achieved, gives us a very clear example of how the educating process was done. The headline reads: '*Diana and Actaeon* is secured for the nation'. It begins by making a short introduction of the campaign and then goes on into three citations from the Directors of NGS NGL and the spokesman of the Duke of Sutherland all giving thanks to the private and public donors that made the campaign a success story. Then it shows the breakdown of the funding, notes to editors and a brief section of background information. I want us to focus on the supporting comments and selected quotes by Linda Fabiani, Jenny Abramsky, David Barrie, Lucian Freud, William Hazlitt and various other names from the art and culture field that are given in the final part of the statement. Each one of these supporting comments is creating the infrastructure that holds the whole discourse of the campaign and gives it validity. Their symbolic presence as

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<sup>66</sup> Bettina Carbonell. 2012, *Museum studies: an anthology of contexts* p. 239

cultural leads, that express how much they value and highlight the importance of *Diana and Actaeon*, both personally and globally was key in the effectivity and success of the campaign.

The perfect mix was achieved, the comments range from those that address the more earthly pleasures- representing the naïve gaze- as seen in Ellis Waterhouse's comment where she says 'in the Actaeon...the poetry has taken on such a profoundly sensuous tinge that it can almost be equated with sex'<sup>67</sup> to the ones that highlight the spiritual and intangible, intellectual pleasures – those related to the aesthetic gaze- Duncan Macmillan's statement is a perfect example of the connoisseurs gaze -those who possesses the aesthetic habitus- He states that 'the themes may be classical, but as he renders them, Titian is uncompromisingly modern. Indeed Cézannes Bathers, and even Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon, still owe a direct debt to these pictures'<sup>68</sup> It is the case of the connoisseurs, the cultural leads that 'justify' the decisions made on behalf of the nation. The educating process is again done from the top down. The critic FR Leavis expressed this idea of the leading knowing class in the following way 'In any period it is upon a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is (apart from cases of the simple and the familiar) only a few who are capable of unprompted first-hand judgement.' He goes on to say 'Upon this minority depends our power of profiting by the finest human experience of the past; they keep alive the most perishable parts of the tradition. Upon them depend the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age'<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2009. *Diana and Actaeon is secured for the Nation*. Press release

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> FR Leavis in Culture and Accessibility. *Art for all? Their policies and our culture* p. 59

## The Value of art- Economic well being

A side of the Titian campaign was related to the more earthly realm of concerns, such as the economic transaction that was to take place. This side of the campaign can also be found in some of the press releases, sentences like: 'economic benefit' 'collection worth many millions of pounds'<sup>70</sup> gives us a hint of how art is moved and handled in the market. It is important for us to recall that such language was not always used in official discourse, but that the increase of economic terms within public culture matters is an effect of the concept of 'creative industries' discussed before. Although one might say that public art museums and galleries are not explicitly seen in the government's cultural policy as 'creative industries' as such, there is a thread that joins them to the idea of using culture as basis for economic growth. In the case of the NGS and NG, keeping the lead in the amount and importance of 'heritage treasures' within their collections is the main goal for survival. The prestige of the objects within the collections will feed the popularity and prestige of the institutions that hold them, leading later on; to an enhancing of tourist appeal that feeds the national economy. This dynamic of art within the economy does not solely function in virtue of altruist desires for the nation but also within private interests.

In Michael Findlay's book, the value of art, he cleverly defines three ways in which a work of art is valuable: potential of commercial value, social value and essential value. He refers to them as the three graces of art. If we look at the Titian campaign we will notice that underlying the entire altruist, nationalist discourse these three ideas are present. Sentences that identify with the commercial value such as 'The world-class reputation of our national galleries and museums is a vital part of our image and also helps to make Scotland more attractive for entrepreneurs and senior executives'<sup>71</sup>, the social 'it will inspire the nation'<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2009. *Diana and Actaeon is secured for the Nation*. Press release

<sup>71</sup> Ibid- Susan Rice, Loyds banking

<sup>72</sup> Ibid- John Bellany

and the essential 'To me, these are simply the most beautiful pictures in the world'<sup>73</sup>.

Although Findlay's work at first sight might not seem applicable to our case study, mainly due to the fact that it approaches the value of art as a an art dealer that caters the rich and powerful that what to make a chic and profitable investment, it is astonishing how the rules he considers to define the worth of a work of art are all present in the Titian's campaign press releases. He clearly exposes, that ' the price of art, whether sold in the primary market or the secondary market, is governed by supply, demand and marketing'<sup>74</sup>

Supply in Findlay's terms is defined as closely linked to rarity, which justifies the price and suggests an exclusive club ownership. In the press releases of the campaign, an exclusive club of ownership is exposed through sentences that refer to the two paintings as of an 'extremely distinguished provenance'<sup>75</sup> 'prestige of royal patronage' , 'sumptuous works of art worthy of the king' when referring to King Philip II, also by alluding to Titian's 'connections with the greatest patrons of his age'<sup>76</sup>

Demand is referred to as determined by 'means and desire, the latter being learned, not innate, and emphasized in some cultures more than others'<sup>77</sup> he goes further on to say 'depending on the cultural history of the region, it may take more than one generation for the appetite for fine art to become as established as the appetite for jewelry, yachts, and private planes'<sup>78</sup> . By this point and all our discussion about cultural policy and culture industries it is evident that the UK has had plenty of time and effort building this appetite for fine art. In the campaign, the representatives of desire and appetite are the artist, curators, celebrities, museum directors that over and over again highlight the importance and pleasures to be acquired when one is exposed to fine art. The selected quotes go from art critics such as William Hazlitt that says 'I was staggered when I saw the works... and looked at them with wondering and with longing eyes... A new sense came upon me, a new

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<sup>73</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2009. *Diana and Actaeon is secured for the Nation*. Press release - Lucian Freud

<sup>74</sup> Michael Findlay. 2012, *The value of art: money, power, beauty* p. 21

<sup>75</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2009. *Diana and Actaeon is secured for the Nation*. Press release

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> Findlay p. 28

<sup>78</sup> Ibid p. 30



heaven and a new earth stood before me...'<sup>79</sup> to representatives of Lloyds Banking Group, Susan Rice, that stress the 'sensible investment' made by the galleries and the nation in their 'educational and cultural opportunities' but also 'economic benefits'.

Marketing is done through art galleries, auction house, artists, and art fairs. In the case of old master works like the Titian's, marketing is self-reproducing and has been going on for decades on a massive scale. The worth of this works is built through the governments discourse that glorifies certain masterpieces, all disciplines related to fine art such as history of art. It is not surprising that The NGS holds records of all the sales made in auction houses of paintings that relate to these two Titian's; it is through the price of this less relevant works that the Galleries can estimate the worth of the real thing. On a much smaller scale, the Galleries had already begun a marketing campaign through catalogues raisonnés, exhibitions like: The Age of Titian in NGS and the display of *Diana and Actaeon* in the National Gallery London a few months after the first press release.

As I have argued in this chapter, The Titian campaign, as a reflection of larger scale political discourse on culture, works between an inherent ambivalence. On the one hand, it states an altruist project that benefits the nation through the use of a nationalist and populist discourse. On the other hand, by looking closely and the language used we can start to unveil the private interests present in the art world, such as that of the collector's, the elite and the connoisseurs. I have tried to expose that Campaigns like this one, are seen more clearly in the light of other politic, economic and social- external- forces to the art world that inevitably create tensions with the idyllic 'official' discourse

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<sup>79</sup> *Diana and Actaeon is secured for the Nation*. Press release

## Conclusion

This dissertation has evaluated the current discourses made on culture in the UK by a range of institutions and individuals. Through the concepts of 'access' and participation, as well as the idea of cultural democracy, we have discussed the official discourse of the government reflected in the nation's cultural policy and the public bodies that enforce the ideology. We have also reviewed the work of an opposing discourse that has questioned this ideology and has exposed some of the gaps within the 'official' view. By evaluating all of this through a specific case study, The Titian campaign, I believe we have painted a somewhat complete picture of culture in the UK in our current time.

I have argued in this dissertation that one of the central obstacles in achieving complete 'access', or what I have referred to as a cultural democracy, is the idea of high art, of excellence. Although barriers like education and economic opportunities have been addressed by the projects released under the UK current cultural policy, I believe that the core of the problem is yet to be discussed. The perpetuation of the idea that 'great art; should be made accessible to the nation only creates a new barrier to cultural democracy. By letting only the few knowledgeable individuals (the connoisseurs) make the decision of what art is best- and not giving any real choice about the type of culture that the people that conform the nation want to really engage with- the government's cultural policy is simply deriving in a new kind of paternalism. When referring to the 'access problem' Author Susan Selwood has put it astonishingly clear

'Education may be a solution to this, as to so many other problems of exclusion. It is also a necessary long- term solution. And, we first have to solve what has proved to be the deep-seated problem of social exclusion from the benefits of education itself before this burden can reasonably be passed on to already hard-pressed arts organization. But, on the basis of the available evidence it is also likely to be the case that the key element in social exclusion is the existing hierarchy of cultural forms and

experiences and the very definition of excellence itself<sup>80</sup> she goes further on to say; 'at the very least there is likely to be a lack of fit, if not direct opposition, between policies designed to support "excellence" and the policies designed to combat social exclusion'<sup>81</sup>

Although the aim of this dissertation is not to give a solution to the problem of 'access' in current UK cultural policy, it is simply a first –rather small- approach to the matter in hope of expanding the scope of recent research. I believe that through recognizing the gaps and real obstacles to cultural democracy a new path could be built for further improvements in cultural policy.

I believe that by reviewing all sides of the spectrum, the people actually involved in the issue of culture, will be able to look at the following statement by Linda Fabiani and start asking new questions about the politics of art which will hopefully lead to a more critical nation that is able to look past the pretty language and see what underlies.

'I am delighted to announce that this world-class collection has been saved for Scotland, underlining the prestige of our National Galleries and offering real educational and economic benefits for years to come. This is a significant investment in Scotland's future, securing a collection worth many millions of pounds for future generations at a fraction of the market cost. Over 1.5 million people visited the Bridgewater collection last year, with two thirds of those coming from outside Edinburgh. The collection is a significant tourist draw with a half day visit to the National Galleries equating to an estimate 50 million a year. The Bridgewater collection clearly represents significant educational opportunities, allowing the National Galleries to teach with the most famous artists in art history: Titian, Raphael, Rembrandt, Poussin to name a few. This collection is a vital source of artistic excellence and inspiration for research, scholarship and the creative industries. The international interest and support generated around this campaign offers a golden opportunity for our National Galleries to raise its profile and show the world that Scotland will continue to punch its weight in cultural excellence'<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Sarah Selwood. 2001. *The UK cultural sector : profile and policy issues* p. 457

<sup>81</sup> Ibid p.458

<sup>82</sup> National Galleries of Scotland and National Gallery London. 2009. *Diana and Actaeon is secured for the Nation*. Press release

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